

F·A·C·S
FARM ANIMAL COUNCIL OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**Kids and Horses
The Saskatchewan Young Horse Development Program**

The Saskatchewan Young Horse Development Program (YHDP) will once again be taking applications for the 2005 - 2007 Session. The YHDP is open to intermediate and advanced youth between the ages of 13 and 21 years of age, and has been designed to teach young horse enthusiasts about the basics of starting a young horse. It will educate participants on care, feed and shelter as well as various training techniques. Participants will be under the supervision of a mentor throughout the term of the program.

Once accepted into the program, participants purchase a foal from a Saskatchewan equine rancher who nominates up to two foals from their 2005 foal crop for the program. Participants are required to visit at least three of the ranches before making their final decision. Though the young person is to perform the training themselves with guidance from their adult mentor, they are allowed to receive advice when choosing their foals.

Foals are sold to the participants for \$800.00 with half of the monies placed into an Enhancement Fund, to be paid out after completion of the Yearling and Two Year Old Showcase. The Showcase is typically held each August and gives participants the opportunity to display the skills that they have acquired. The yearlings are shown in Halter and on the Lunge Line, and two year olds are shown under saddle. The Enhancement Fund payout is based on marks received; the average payout for 2004 was \$400.00 for two year olds and \$140.00 for yearlings.

A unique feature of the Saskatchewan YHDP is the public speaking component and its link to animal welfare issues. Participants enrolled in the program are required to select a topic from the six animal welfare topics given and make a 2-5 minute presentation at both the yearling and two year old showcases.

The popularity of the YHDP continues to grow. Here are a couple of examples of what parents are saying about the YHDP:

- Meryle Venaas from Moosomin states, *"kids working with animals teaches them basic things, like responsibility and respect and that relates back to people."*
- Brenda Clarke from Hudson Bay shared, *"being in the program brought a lot of confidence and experience to my daughter."*

The Saskatchewan YHDP is a partnership program offered by the Saskatchewan Equine Ranching Association (SERA), the North American Equine Ranching Information Council Inc. (NAERIC) and the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS). If you are interested in joining the Saskatchewan YHDP or would like more information on the program, visit the FACS website at http://www.facs.sk.ca/proactive_yhdp.htm or contact Adele Buettner at the address listed below. Deadline for applications is **May 31, 2005**.

The Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) is a membership-based, non-profit organization that represents the livestock industry in advancing responsible welfare, care and handling practices in agriculture. FACS endeavors to raise producer awareness of the economic and ethical benefits of animal welfare and help consumers achieve a greater understanding of animal care issues.

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For more information, contact:

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